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My article on Everest tourism, which was published in Geography and You in 2019. Photo - Ramesh Pokhrel - This season, so many people came to climb Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain, that there was a traffic jam. Due to that jam, an accident occurred and 11 people died. Among them are 2 Indians. Four days ago, on a single day, more than 250 people were queuing up to climb the Everest peak. Such incidents of traffic jams have happened before as well.

When Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay climbed the summit of Everest in 1953, they would not have imagined that just four decades after their expedition, climbing Everest would turn into an expensive hobby and business. Today, the garbage spread by climbers on Mount Everest is polluting this great mountain.

Mount Everest is located in the Mahalangur range of the Great Himalayas. It is situated on the China and Nepal border but Mount Everest is mainly in Nepal. In the 1850s, a Bengali surveyor named Radhanath Sikdar discovered that Everest was the highest mountain. It was named Mount Everest after George Everest, the then Director General of the Survey of India. The height of Everest is about 29029 feet above sea level. Which is 8848 meters.

Serious attempts to climb Everest began in 1921 when Tibet opened its doors to foreigners; entering Nepal had been very difficult for foreigners until then as the Nepalese government did not permit entry.

In 1921-22, two British expeditions went to Everest but both failed. On May 29, 1953, Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Nepali Sherpa Tenzing Norgay succeeded in climbing it. Both of them were members of a British expedition team led by Colonel

John Hunt. Strong winds blow on the peak of Everest most of the year and the temperature is always below zero. Oxygen is barely 30% to 40% compared to normal land. Due to this, climbing it becomes very difficult.

In the months of May and September the wind becomes somewhat slow. Hence this is the best time for climbing.

There are 18 routes to climb Everest. The climb from Tibet is about 35 kilometers and from Nepal it is 20 kilometers. Climbing Everest is difficult but in terms of climbing, it is not the most difficult. The most difficult climb is considered to be K2 mountain located in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. After that there are Nanga Parbat, Annapurna, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Nanda Devi and other mountains. In terms of top 10 most difficult climbs, Everest is at number nine.

The most dangerous climb is Mount Annapurna in Nepal. Where the mortality rate is 33 percent. That means if 100 people climb, 33 die. On K2 it is 22 percent while on Everest the rate is 4 percent.

Due to lack of oxygen, the brain stops working and in the worst case, death can also occur. In 1978, Italian mountaineer Renald Messner climbed Everest alone without the help of any Sherpa and without oxygen. After that, very few people have been able to climb Everest without oxygen because it is dangerous. The Sherpa community, famous as Everest climbers and porters, has a characteristic in their DNA that these people remain relatively normal even in low oxygen. The Sherpa people came to Nepal from Tibet in the fifteenth century and settled in relatively lower areas around the Mahalangur Himalayas. Today the Sherpa people have become synonymous with mountaineering in the world. Mountaineering has raised the standard of living of the Sherpas. Today many Nepali Sherpas who are doing business in mountaineering are earning lakhs and crores. Some even have their own

small planes and helicopters. Nepal is a poor country. The main source of income for Nepalese is tourism after migrant workers. A large part of tourism comes only from mountaineering and trekking.

Nepalese have used this employment opportunity in a good way. There are more than 500 stores in Kathmandu's Thamel market selling various mountaineering and trekking equipment. There are hundreds of agencies that provide packages for mountaineering, trekking, rafting, etc.

Winter shoes, jackets etc. made in Nepal are also sold in abundance in Thamel. There are many agencies here which provide readymade packages to help people fulfill their dream of climbing the world's highest mountain. Apart from Nepalis, people from other countries also run mountaineering agencies here. By charging a huge amount, they help inexperienced people fulfill their dream of climbing Everest. For this, they charge from 40 thousand dollars to 1.25 lakh dollars. Permit fees have to be paid separately. The Nepal government has fixed fees for climbing different mountains. Which is 11 thousand dollars for Everest. Apart from this, the Nepal government has also imposed a garbage deposit fee of 4 thousand dollars per team. This deposit amount is returned only when each mountaineer brings back four kilograms of garbage to the base camp.

The dirt caused by climbers is a big problem on Everest. About 16 oxygen cylinders are used per climber to climb Everest. When they are exhausted, the climbers leave them on the mountain itself. So far, about 6 thousand people have successfully climbed Everest. Their excreta also contaminates Everest. Everest is called Sagarmatha in the Nepali language, it has been given the status of a sacred mountain but for one of the poorest countries in the world like Nepal, earning money from it is a compulsion.

Eight people were killed in an accident in 1996. A film named 'Everest' was also made on this incident in 2015. In 2014, 16 Sherpa guides died due to an avalanche in the Khumbu glacier. 22 people present in the base camp were killed due to the 2015 earthquake.

In order to grab the fame gained after climbing Everest, many inexperienced people also go to these agencies and try to fulfill their dream and often become successful.

Nima Sherpa, who runs a trekking and expedition agency named Seven Brother Summitier in Thamel, Kathmandu, told the author that many of my customers who could not climb my mountain which is eight thousand feet lower than Everest, we helped them climb Everest. Nima Sherpa has seven brothers and all seven are involved in this mountaineering business and all the brothers have climbed Everest. Nima Sherpa has climbed Everest 19 times which was a record at one time.

About 800 to 1,000 people climb Everest every year from the Nepal side and 600 to 800 from the Tibet side. The route to Tibet is relatively longer.

Every day it is reported in Indian newspapers that a certain person has climbed Everest. How did this happen so easily? A company of Sherpas ties a rope from the base camp to the peak which can be used by paying a fixed fee. Sherpas also carry all the luggage of the climbers. Apart from this, they also provide hot coffee, food, tea to their customers at an altitude of 20 thousand feet. Mostly rich European tourists spend up to 1.25 lakh dollars per person for this. Many people say that Everest has become a commercial mountain. According to Renold Messner, who is considered the best mountaineer of the world, these people climbing Everest are not true mountaineers. Rather they are tourists who climb Everest to satisfy their ego. Renold Messner has climbed all the mountains above 8 thousand meters first and without any guide or Sherpa. Messner says that climbing Everest should be stopped for a

few years. Messner says that adventure does not come in packages. Real mountaineering is climbing a mountain without a porter.

There are many mountains in India which are more difficult to climb than Everest but the name is more famous for climbing Everest. Climbing Mount Meru, Nanda Devi, Kanchenjunga, Kamet, Thalay Sagar, Shivling in India is more difficult than Everest.

In order to earn money, tour operators take inexperienced and unfit people to Everest, which also causes problems. More than 250 dead bodies of climbers are lying at various places on the way to Everest. Most of the people die on Everest due to fatigue, cold or falling. Bringing their dead bodies from there is a very difficult task. Some dead bodies act as landmarks. Apart from this, thousands of oxygen cylinders are also scattered. An average of 16 oxygen cylinders are needed by a mountaineer. Every season, about 14 tons of human excreta accumulates at the base camp. Which gets collected in the drum of the toilet tent. After that, the Sherpas take it to the nearby village Gorkshep and fill it in pits. Due to defecation in the open, the snow there also gets contaminated at many places. From time to time, campaigns are also run to collect the garbage spread on Everest. But that is not enough. If this continues, then Everest will become the highest garbage dump due to people's ego satisfaction of climbing Everest. Just a few days ago, China banned the entry of general tourists to the Everest base camp on the Tibet side. Now only climbers with permit to climb Everest can go there. China took this step due to the huge crowd of tourists in the base camp and the pollution caused by it. China, being a richer country than Nepal, can impose restrictions but it is difficult to stop a poor country like Nepal for which adventure tourism is the main source of income.